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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000192

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DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [US](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: UN JOINT MEDIATION SUPPORT TEAM STILL GROPING TO FIND A WAY  
FORWARD WITH DARFUR PEACE PROCESS

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 112

(B) KHARTOUM 95

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) UN JMST member Hideo Ikebe opined that neither Darfur's rebel groups nor the GoS are willing to seriously engage in a peace process, and organizational and leadership deficiencies within the UN's structures in Sudan continue to hamper its effectiveness. Without a long-term, clearly-articulated approach to the political track and greater engagement with civil society, Darfur peace process efforts will continue to sputter.

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CONDITIONS NOT RIPE FOR PEACE TALKS  
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¶2. (SBU) TDY Poloff met February 4 with UN Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) member Hideo Ikebe to discuss the status of the Darfur peace process and JMST activities. Ikebe assessed that the timing is simply not ripe to engage in a serious political process in Darfur. Neither the various rebel factions nor the GoS demonstrate genuine political will to negotiate or compromise. Under these conditions, he held, some members of the JMST believe it a waste of time and resources to try to push parties to the table - particularly if not all the "right" rebel representatives (military and political) are present.

¶3. (SBU) Ikebe contended that the JMST and international community could help foster more suitable conditions for a viable political process by adopting a longer-term approach. He said the tactic of setting artificial deadlines has proven ineffective. Instead the JMST should focus on strengthening civil society (including Arab tribes) and enhancing the links between these groups and the rebels as a means of making the rebels more "accountable" to Darfurians. (Note: Though such a logical step would be seen very suspiciously by the paranoid regime in Khartoum. End note.)

¶4. (SBU) The JMST member also suggested that the international community should concentrate on cultivating second-tier leadership in many of the rebel movements, pointing out that most of them still lack capacity, which will work against them in any eventual negotiating process. Developing second-tier leadership could have the secondary benefit of expediting the transition of armed groups to political entities.

¶5. (SBU) Ikebe was unaware of any upcoming benchmarks in the

political process (workshops, conferences, etc.) and explained that the Special Envoys would continue to remain in touch with the various rebel groups and encourage them, where possible, to consolidate their political agendas. (Note: Other recent informal meetings with the JMST indicate that the Special Envoys are leaning toward a shuttle diplomacy approach to the process, possibly focusing on the elements of a comprehensive ceasefire, while avoiding mediation meetings set on arbitrary dates in which the main rebel groups will not participate. The JMST does not believe that further rebel unification at this point is possible, and is focusing the five major rebel groups - JEM, URF, SLA/U, Shafie, SLM-Abdelwahid. End note.)

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UN ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DYSFUNCTION  
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¶16. (SBU) Ikebe described ongoing frictions between the JMST, Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) and UNAMID Civil Affairs. He observed that all three entities have a mandate to engage civil society, causing significant overlap and - without good coordination mechanisms in place - bureaucratic friction.

¶17. (SBU) Poloff and Ikebe lamented that many of the internal coordination problems within the Hybrid structure stemmed from abysmal leadership, particularly on the part of Joint Special Representative (JSR) Adada, "who doesn't do anything," he observed. Ikebe was subtly critical too of both UN/AU Special Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Salim, remarking that their part-time presence and uncertainty about the length of their tenure further undermine the UN's ability to effectively manage a political process. Without competent management at senior levels, many of the structural challenges and underlying bureaucratic tensions will be impossible to overcome, Ikebe opined.

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COMMENT  
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¶18. (SBU) Ikebe's comments re-confirm many of the obstacles to the efficient functioning of UNAMID and the Darfur peace process that Post has highlighted in the past. The full deployment of UNAMID, while necessary to stabilizing the region, may not succeed in fundamentally improving the situation in Darfur unless UNAMID leadership is strengthened. JSR Adada desperately needs a stronger political team to advise him. Additionally, there is a clear need for UN headquarters to accelerate recruitment of civil and political affairs personnel. In Khartoum, Washington, New York, and Addis, we should collectively continue to urge the mediation team - which has recently indicated a greater willingness to entertain input - to outline a clear strategy that leads to a political settlement of the conflict. Shuttle diplomacy is fine in the short term, but a chief mediator supported by a capable team needs to be in Darfur fulltime to achieve any progress.

FERNANDEZ